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RETURN

To an Address from the Legislative Assembly, dated 16th ultimo, for Copies of Two Petitions from the Mayor and Inhabitants of Brockville and Cornwall, respectively, relative to the transmission of Immigrants through the inland waters of the Province.

By Command,

PIERRE J. O. CHAUVEAU,
Secretary.

Secretary's Office,
Quebec, 2nd November, 1854.

(Copy,) BROCKVILLE, August, 1854.

SIR,—I have the honor to transmit, for the consideration of the Executive, the enclosed Petition of several of the Inhabitants of Brockville, praying for the regulation of the transmission of Passengers through the inland waters.

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed,) JOHN CRAWFORD,
Mayor.

Honorable P. J. O. Chauveau,
Provincial Secretary, Quebec.

To His Excellency James Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Governor General of British North America, &c., &c., &c., in Council.

THE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF BROCKVILLE AND ITS VICINITY,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That, during the prevalence fo the existing epidemic, it is highly important that the salutary provisions of the Act 16 Victoria, chap. 167, with reference to the regulation of the number of steerage passengers that may be carried by steamboats in this Province, should be brought into immediate force.

That, with a view as well to the promotion of the general health of the Province as to that of the emigrants arriving upon our shores, it is absolutely necessary that the present system of loading the steamboats plying on our waters with numbers of steerage passengers, limited only by the will of the proprietors or the

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capacity of the vessels, irrespective, in many cases, of the health, comfort, or convenience of the passengers, should be at once put a stop to.

That already, in several instances, disease has occurred upon steamers during their transit, and the malady is thus introduced to localities it might not otherwise have visited.

Wherefore your Petitioners, believing that the granting of the prayer of the Petition will conduce to the promotion of public health, and is called for by the dictates of humanity and public justice, humbly pray that your Excellency, in Council, will be pleased to adopt such order in Council, prescribing and regulating the numbers of Cabin and Steerage Passengers that may be carried by any steamboat or class of steamboats, in this Province, as to you may seem meet; and that you will be further pleased to cause the same to come into speedy force, under the provisions of the said Act.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever humbly pray.

Brockville, 9th August, 1854.

(Signed,) JOHN CRAWFORD,
Mayor, and others.

CORNWALL, 11th August, 1854.

SIR,—I have the honor to transmit through you, for the consideration of the Executive Council, the enclosed Petition, to which I beg to commend your attention.

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed,) WM. CLINE.

To the Honorable P. J. O. Chauveau,
Provincial Secretary, Quebec.

To His Excellency James Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Governor General of British North America, &c., &c., &c., in Council.

THE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF CORNWALL AND ITS VICINITY,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That during the prevalence of the existing epidemic, it is especially desirable that the salutary provisions of the Act 16 Victoria, chap. 167, with reference to the regulation of the number of steerage passengers that may be carried by steamboats in this Province, should be brought into immediate force.

That, with a view as well to the promotion of the general health of the Province as to that of the emigrants arriving upon our shores, it is absolutely necessary that the present system of loading the steamboats plying on our waters with numbers of steerage passengers, limited only by the will of the owners, or the assumed capacity of the vessels, irrespective, in many cases, of the health, comfort, or convenience of the passengers, should at once be put a stop to.

That already, in several instances, disease has occurred upon steamers during their transit, and the malady is thus introduced to localities it might not otherwise have visited.

Wherefore your Petitioners, believing that the granting of the prayer of this Petition will conduce to the promotion of the public health, and is called for by the dictates of humanity and public justice, humbly pray that your Excellency in Council, will be pleased to adopt such order in Council, prescribing and regulating the numbers of Cabin and Steerage Passengers that may be carried by any steamboat or class of steamboats, as to you may seem meet; and that you will be further pleased to cause the same to come into speedy force, under the provisions of the said Act, or that if any such order have been adopted you will be pleased to concert measures for its actual enforcement.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(Signed,) ANDREW ELLIOT,
Mayor, and others.

Cornwall, 11th August, 1854.

CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH,
QUEBEC, 19th August, 1854.

SIR,—In reply to your reference on the subject of Petitions from the Inhabitants of Brockville and Cornwall, I am directed to state:

That the Central Board of Health, having consulted the following authorities, "Imperial Acts," "Passengers, 15 and 16 Victoria, cap. 44," "Seamen, 13 and 14 Victoria, cap. 93", on the matter of the space to be allowed generally or individually to passengers by steamers and other vessels, and having received the testimony of the most experienced masters of steamboats trading between Quebec and Montreal, are of opinion that, during the prevalence of an epidemic, such as is now visiting this Province, the minimum space to be allowed to each adult emigrant passenger should be nine superficial feet, on the deck, or part of the deck assigned for their accommodation, in the steamers running between Quebec and Montreal, and that in the Upper Canada and direct running steamers, the minimum space shall be twelve superficial feet.

The Board would recommend that *at all times* the minimum space for each adult emigrant passenger should be restricted to *six* superficial feet, provided always that in seasons of health, as well as in seasons of disease, the deck allotted to emigrant passengers shall be free of goods and stores of all kinds, their personal baggage excepted.

The Board would recommend that all steamers carrying passengers on the waters of this Province should be measured, and their capacity, in accordance with this rule, ascertained and recorded, that any contravention may at once be detected and punished.

The Board respectfully but earnestly begs to press on the Government the urgent necessity of providing a remedy for the defects in the system of transport of emigrants through the waters of this Province.

There exists, in the opinion of the Board, two main faults in this matter: 1st, irregularity and want of sufficient accommodation on board the steamboats; 2nd, insufficient accommodation on shore at the various stations between which these steamboats ply, and where their passengers are generally landed. From the practical information received by the Board, it is of opinion that, at present, and perhaps at future times, it may be impracticable from want of steam accommodation to forward the tide of emigration up the Province with the regularity that is to be desired, especially in times of an epidemic, when the numbers to be carried by each steamer should be limited as has been suggested. It is obvious therefore, and humanity and political expediency suggest, that there must be constructed ample

depots at or near the large Cities of this Province (as has already been brought under the notice of the Government), where the emigrants may, in comfort and in safety to themselves and the community at large, await the period of their transhipment on their journey westward.

These depots should be ample enough to accommodate any probable number of emigrants that may arrive, and to give them lodging for a reasonable length of time if they are desirous of settling on the spot, and cannot find immediate lodging elsewhere.

The depots may be so arranged that the steamboats may land the emigrants at or near them, where they may be received by officers connected with the Emigration Department, whose duty, among others, it should be to point out the danger of indulging in, and, if possible, to prevent the sale of such unwholesome articles of diet, as are too eagerly sought after by those recently landed from a sea voyage.

Of these depots the first and most extensive one will be required near Quebec, and the Board would hope that another season may not pass without an ample one being formed in such a convenient locality as may be decided on.

Should these depots be established throughout the Province, the practice of forwarding emigrants directly through to Hamilton and other Western parts may be discontinued, as the occasional purification of the vessels and their passengers, on transhipment, would conduce to the preservation of health.

Finally, the Board would reiterate its already expressed opinion, which was corroborated by the report of the Local Board of Health of Cornwall, that all steamers carrying emigrants, should, during the prevalence of an epidemic, be compelled to carry a Medical Officer.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

(Signed,) THOMAS BLATHERWICK,
Secretary.

The Honorable P. J. O. Chauveau,
Provincial Secretary, Quebec.

1st Session, 5th Parliament, 18 Victoria, 1854.

RETURN

To an Address to His Excellency the Governor General, for Copies of two Petitions of inhabitants of Brockville and Cornwall, relative to transmission of Immigrants.

(*Mr. Crawford.*)

Ordered, by the Legislative Assembly, *to be Printed, 28th November*, 1854

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